



Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

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AGENDA DATE: December 2, 2009

TO: Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

FROM: Front Country Trails Task Force Staff

SUBJECT: Trail Survey Project Update

RECOMMENDATION: That the Front Country Trails (FCT) Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force receives a status report on the Trail Survey Project.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this staff report is to provide the Task Force with an update on the Trail Survey Project. At the July 1, 2009 FCT Task Force meeting, the Task Force recommended that staff contract with Beneficial Designs to complete the Trail Survey Project. At that time, it appeared that the automated data collection process, called High Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP), would be the most efficient and cost effective approach to the project.

Through further discussions with Beneficial Designs, staff determined that HETAP was not as useful as originally expected for a variety of reasons. It is not compatible with UTAP software and cannot be augmented with additional trail condition information. For the data to be useful for ongoing trail management, it would need to be converted for use with the Trailware software and subsequent data collection. Examples of future information include data for new or changing trail conditions, and non-standard data such as line of sight, drop off or step-out.

As a result, staff determined that using UTAP for the Trail Survey Project provides a better approach for subsequent assessments for new or changing trail conditions. To complete the project, the agencies hired Michelle Smith to work on a part-time basis to complete the surveys with the assistance of volunteers. Ms. Smith, who also works locally for California State Parks, has more than a decade of experience with UTAP and Beneficial Designs.

Trail Survey Project

The Trail Survey Project is divided into two phases. Phase 1, which began in November 2009, includes Cold Spring Trail and Romero Canyon Trail. These trails were not affected by the Jesusita Fire. Phase 2 which will begin in spring 2010, after winter rains, includes Jesusita, Tunnel, Rattlesnake, West Fork Cold Spring and San Ysidro trails.

Data collection requires a team of two to three people. Volunteers receive training prior to assisting with the trail assessment work. Two half-day volunteer training sessions were held on November 4th. Trail assessment work began on Cold Spring Trail on November 10th. Upcoming work days in December 2009 and January 2010 include:

<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>
December 2	December 3
December 9	December 10
December 16	December 17
January 6	January 7
January 13	January 14

Approximately half of the volunteer positions are filled and staff is actively seeking additional volunteers. Full days (up to 8 hours) are encouraged although arrangements may be possible for half days. Additional training opportunities will be scheduled.

This assessment will not be possible without volunteer help and support. To volunteer, individuals can contact Kathy Frye at kfrye@santabarbaraca.gov or 897-1976.

Project Cost

From the standpoint of project cost, the cost of completing the entire Trail Survey Project using UTAP is \$7,000. This is approximately \$1,000 more than the expected cost of using HETAP. (The first phase is estimated to cost \$2,100.) However, it will be possible to build from the data set and more easily use the survey information to assist with subsequent assessments, which will be of greater value over the long-term. And the costs to purchase and maintain the software are significantly less for UTAP.

The Sierra Club and the Santa Barbara County Trails Council have made tentative pledges to help fund the project. To get the project going, the agencies will fund Phase 1. Assuming Phase 1 is successful, the agencies will seek financial assistance for the completion of Phase 2.

PREPARED BY: Kathy Frye, Natural Areas Planner, City of Santa Barbara

APPROVED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director